

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. OPEC AFTERMATH: EFFECT ON LIBYAN POLICY

EMBASSY TRIPOLI POINTS OUT THAT THE ATTACK ON OPEC'S VIENNA HEADQUARTERS AND THE RESULTING MURDER OF LIBYAN OFFICIAL IZMIRLI BY TERRORISTS WHOSE POLITICAL LINE MIRRORS HIS OWN IS A SEVERE EMBARRASSMENT TO QADHAFI. THAT THE TERRORISTS RETURNED TO ALGERIA AFTER HAVING APPARENTLY BEEN DENIED SANCTUARY IN TRIPOLI IS A GOOD SIGN. ONE CAN AT LEAST HOPE THAT IZMIRLI'S DEATH WILL BRING HOME TO QADHAFI AND COMPANY THE COSTS OF POLITICAL TERRORISM. (CONFIDENTIAL) TRIPOLI 1443, 12/23.)

2. SYRIAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON DISCOUNTED

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EMBASSIES BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS COMMENT THAT THEY GIVE LITTLE

CREDENCE TO SPECULATION THAT SYRIAN MILITARY UNITS PARTICIPATED IN THE DECEMBER 22 SKIRMISHES IN LEBANON'S ZAHLE AREA. EMBASSY BEIRUT:

--OPINES THAT AT MOST THE ATTACKERS WERE A MIXED BAG OF LEFTISTS, PROBABLY INCLUDING SOME MEMBERS OF SATQA, WHOM CHAMOUN CALLED "FOREIGNERS;"

--WARNS THAT EXTREME CAUTION IS NECESSARY IN ASSESSING ANY STATEMENTS EMANATING FROM SPOKESMEN ON BOTH SIDES, AS THERE IS CURRENTLY TOO MUCH CONFUSION, MISINFORMATION AND DOWNRIGHT PREVARICATION EVIDENT IN LEBANON.

EMBASSY DAMASCUS:

--TURNED UP ONLY PUZZLED SPECULATION AMONG THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY ABOUT WHAT THE SYRIANS WOULD HAVE TO GAIN BY THE ALLEGED INTERVENTIONS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME;

--OBSERVES THAT THE LAST THING THE SARG WANTS IS TO BECOME EMBROILED MILITARILY IN LEBANON THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SC SESSION ON THE MIDDLE EAST. (SECRET) BEIRUT 15472 AND (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 5128, 12/23.)

3. DESPITE RUSSIAN AFFAIR, KUWAIT PROFESSES FIDELITY

KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE JABIR AL-AHMAD TOLD DEPARTING AMBASSADOR STOLTZFUS THE GOK CONSIDERS ACCEPTING SOVIET ARMS AS PRIMARILY A POLITICAL MOVE, NECESSARY IN PURSUING ITS POLICY OF DEVELOPING TIES WITH ALL SIDES. BESIDES, HE ADDED:

--RUSSIAN WEAPONS ARE ESSENTIALLY ONLY WINDOW DRESSING. ("THE RUSSIANS WON'T SELL US THEIR MOST MODERN WEAPONS ANYWAY.")

--KUWAIT KNOWS FULL WELL WHOM IT CAN RELY ON AND HOPES THE US WILL EXPEDITE ITS MILITARY AID PROGRAMS, SINCE THEY WILL BE THE GUTS OF ANY TRULY EFFECTIVE KUWAITI
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DEFENSE CAPABILITY. (SECRET) KUWAIT 5371 (EXDIS), 12/23.)

4. ARGENTINA: PERON HANGS ON, BUT FOR HOW LONG?

ALTHOUGH THE REBELLION OF DISSIDENT AIR FORCE OFFICERS HAS ENDED, THE GOA AND THE COUNTRY REMAIN IN A STATE OF CRISIS. THE MILITARY IS CONCERNED BY MRS. PERON'S APPARENT REFUSAL

TO RESIGN OR TAKE LEAVE AND HER INABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE
REVOLT OR THE RUNNING OF HER OFFICE.

EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES NOTES THAT THE EXISTENCE OF MRS.
PERON'S GOVERNMENT HAS AGAIN BEEN PROLONGED, BUT TIME IS
CLEARLY RUNNING OUT, AS THE ARMED FORCES TIRE OF WAITING
FOR CIVILIANS TO REMOVE HER BY CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS.

IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, REUTER REPORTS THAT IN THE EVENING
OF DECEMBER 23 A LARGE FORCE OF LEFTWING GUERILLAS ATTACKED
A MILITARY ARSENAL SOUTH OF BUENOS AIRES, WHILE ANOTHER
GROUP SIMULTANEOUSLY ATTACKED THREE NEARBY POLICE POSTS AND
A REGIMENTAL BARRACKS IN LA PLATA. HEAVY FIGHTING RESULTED
BETWEEN THE GUERILLAS AND ARMY UNITS. (CONFIDENTIAL)
BUENOS AIRES 8351, 12/23.) KISSINGER

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